

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 292937 TOSEC 310388

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 292937 TOSEC 310388

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION TO SECSTATE INFO SITREP COLLECTIVE
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QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 8683

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION NOVEMBER 30 - DECEMBER 1

REF: BEIRUT 8658 (DTG 291518Z NOV 76)

1. SUMMARY. COMPROMISE FORMULA PREPARED FOR HEAVY ARMS
COLLECTION BUT CONTROVERSY OVER LOGISTICS OF COLLECTION
CONTINUES AND NO PROGRESS MADE. REPORTEDLY NO PALESTINIAN
COMMANDOS IN IMMEDIATE BORDER AREA; POSTING OF NON-SYRIAN
TROOPS ALONG BORDER PROPOSED. SYRIA WARNS THOSE WHO
CRITICIZE ITS LEBANESE POLICY. LIBYANS HAVE WITHDRAWN MOST
OF THEIR PEACEKEEPING FORCE WITH REMAINDER EXPECTED DEPART
SOON. LATEST SPECULATION IS NEW COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WILL
NOT BE FORMED UNTIL END OF DECEMBER. SYRIA HAS RELEASED
381 PALESTINIAN AND 71 LEBANESE PRISONERS OF WAR. FRENCH
SENDING TEAM TO ADVISE ON RECONSTRUCTION. KIDNAP VICTIMS
RELEASED FROM BOTH SECTORS OF BEIRUT DUE TO RED CROSS
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 292937 TOSEC 310388

NEGOTIATIONS. ISF FORCES REPORTING FOR DUTY, BUT

EQUIPMENT NEEDED TO ESTABLISH THEIR EFFECTIVENESS. MEA INSTITUTES FLIGHTS TO CYPRUS. MORE ELECTRICITY AND WATER FOR BEIRUT. SHORTAGE OF MAZOUT AND GASOLINE SHOULD END SOON. END SUMMARY.

2. HEAVY WEAPONS COLLECTION. THE COLLECTION OF HEAVY ARMS CONTINUES TO BE MAIN TOPIC OF DISCUSSION IN BEIRUT. L'ORIENT-LE JOUR REPORTS COMPROMISE FORMULA INVOLVING TURNOVER BY MILITIAS OF ONLY THOSE HEAVY WEAPONS ORIGINALLY TAKEN FROM LEBANESE ARMY. WEAPONS FROM OTHER SOURCES WOULD BE PLACED IN DEPOTS UNDER SURVEILLANCE BY PARTY INVOLVED AND ASF. SINCE ALL PALESTINIAN WEAPONS FALL UNDER LATTER CATEGORY, ARMS DEPOTS WOULD BE ESTABLISHED IN EACH PALESTINIAN CAMP AND GUARDED BY ASF AND CLAP. LEFTISTS REPORTEDLY PREPARED SUBMIT WEAPONS INVENTORY AND TURN OVER WEAPONS OBTAINED FROM LEBANESE ARMY AND ISF, BUT PALESTINIANS INSIST HEAVY ARMS COLLECTION APPLIES ONLY TO LEBANESE PARTIES. FINAL DECISION ON QUESTION DELAYED UNTIL DEC 3. KFUR FRONT STATES IT WILL NOT HAND OVER WEAPONS UNTIL PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE HAS DONE SO; AT SAME TIME, JUNBLATT INSISTS ON KFUR FRONT TURNOVER FIRST AND THAT ARMS BE COLLECTED FROM LEBANESE PARTIES ONLY. MURABITUN LEADER IBRAHIM QULAYLAT OPPOSED TURNOVER, SAYING WEAPONS SHOULD REMAIN "RESPONSIBILITY OF REVOLUTIONARY FIGHTERS." SYRIAN FONMIN KHADDAM QUOTED AS TAKING STRONG STAND AT PRESS CONFERENCE NOV 29: "ALL WARRING FACTIONS IN LEBANON WILL BE DISARMED, AND THAT INCLUDES THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT." JUNBLATT PROTESTED THIS STATEMENT, HOWEVER, BY ANNOUNCING "MR. KHADDAM HAS NO RIGHT TO MAKE SUCH A STATEMENT BECAUSE WE ARE UNDER NOBODY'S TUTELAGE."

3. THE SOUTH. PRESS GIVING WIDE PLAY TO CHARGE LANE'S CALLS ON SARKIS, LINKING MEETINGS WITH SOUTHERN SITUATION, AND CONTINUES INTENSIVE SPECULATION ON VARIOUS FORMULAS FOR SOLVING SECURITY PROBLEM IN THAT AREA. L'ORIENT-LE JOUR NOV 30 SAYS, ACCORDING TO FOREIGN JOURNALISTS, THERE NO LONGER PALESTINIAN COMMANDOS IN IMMEDIATE LEBANESE-ISRAELI BORDER AREA
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PAGE 03 STATE 292937 TOSEC 310388

AND THAT PALESTINIANS CONCENTRATED BETWEEN SIDON AND NABATIYAH. PAPERS EXPRESSING GENERAL VIEW ISRAEL WOULD NOT BE OPPOSED TO STATIONING OF NON-SYRIAN TROOPS IN SMALL NUMBERS IN BORDER AREA IF PALESTINIAN GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES CURTAILED, AND THAT AGREEMENT FOR ASF PRESENCE IN TYRE AND NABATIYAH HAS ALREADY BEEN REACHED.

4. SYRIAN WARNING: L'ORIENT-LE JOUR DEC 1 QUOTES WARNING IN SYRIAN DAILY "AL-BAAS" THAT THOSE WHO PERSIST IN ATTACKING SYRIA'S ACTIONS IN LEBANON RISK HAVING "RADICAL MEASURES TAKEN AGAINST THEM." WE UNDERSTAND THIS WARNING WAS AIMED AT RAYMOND EDDE, AMONG OTHERS, AND THAT AS A RESULT EDDE HAS DECIDED NOT TO ISSUE ANY MORE ANTI-SYRIAN PUBLIC STATEMENTS.

5. FAREWELL TO LIBYANS. LIBYA ANNOUNCED NOV 29 DECISION TO WITHDRAW ITS 700 TROOPS FROM ARAB PEACE-KEEPING FORCE. FIRST CONTINGENT OF 140 LEFT BEIRUT BY AIR NOV 29 AND SECOND CONTINGENT OF 300 TROOPS DEPARTED NOV 30. REMAINDER EXPECTED LEAVE NEXT FEW DAYS, POSSIBLY BY BOAT FROM SIDON. OFFICIAL REASON GIVEN FOR THE WITHDRAWAL WAS THAT "THE NATURE OF THE MISSION OF THE ARAB PEACEKEEPING FORCE HAS CHANGED FROM PEACEKEEPING TO DETERRENCE."

6. FORMATION OF NEW CABINET. LATEST PRESS SPECULATION SUGGESTS NEW GOVERNMENT WILL NOT BE FORMED BEFORE END OF DECEMBER. RASHID KARAMI, WHO VISITED PRESIDENT SARKIS NOV 30, FOR FIRST TIME IN OVER A YEAR, SAID IN SWISS TELEVISION INTERVIEW HE FAVORED A CABINET OF "NATIONAL UNION" AS PRELUDE TO GENERAL RECONCILIATION AND REFORM. L'ORIENT-LE JOUR REPORTS THAT SINCE CABINET MAY NOT BE FORMED FOR ANOTHER MONTH, SARKIS REQUESTED KARAMI TAKE MORE ACTIVE ROLE AS ACTING PRIME MINISTER. PIERRE GEMAYEL INDICATED HIS PREFERENCE FOR LARGE CABINET AND CREATION OF NEW MINISTRIES, SUCH AS RECONSTRUCTION, DISPLACED PERSONS AND LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS.

7. SYRIA RELEASES LEBANESE AND PALESTINIAN PRISONERS.
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PAGE 04 STATE 292937 TOSEC 310388

ON EVE OF MUSLIM FEAST OF AL ADHA (NOV 30) PRESIDENT ASAD ANNOUNCED RELEASE OF 381 PALESTINIANS AND 71 (OR 74) LEBANESE ARRESTED DURING THE CIVIL WAR. PALESTINIANS WERE RELEASED IN DAMASCUS AND LEBANESE BROUGHT TO THE BORDER AT MASNAA.

8. RECONSTRUCTION: GHASSAN TUEINI SAID FRENCH TECHNICAL MISSION WILL ARRIVE IN BEIRUT SOON TO ASSIST IN RECONSTRUCTION PLANNING. RECONSTRUCTION, HE SAID, SHOULD FOCUS ON: 1) BEIRUT COMMERCIAL CENTER; 2) INDUSTRIAL AREAS; 3) ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE; AND 4) REINTEGRATION OF DISPLACED PERSONS AND RURAL ASSISTANCE.

9. HOSTAGES RELEASED. LEBANESE RED CROSS REPORTED THAT 104 LEBANESE KIDNAP VICTIMS WERE RETURNED TO THEIR

FAMILIES NOV 30. TWENTY OF THESE HAD BEEN HELD IN EAST BEIRUT AND 84 IN WEST BEIRUT. RELEASE WAS RESULT OF LONG NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN RED CROSS AND VARIOUS MILITIAS.

10. INTERNAL SECURITY. AS SAFIR REPORTS 85 PERCENT OF THE GENDARMERIE AND 95 PERCENT OF INVESTIGATIVE ELEMENTS OF THE ISF HAD CHECKED IN WITH THEIR FORMER UNITS. ISF DIRGEN HISHAM SHA'AR SAYS THESE FORCES WILL SHOULDER THEIR FULL RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN PROVIDED NECESSARY EQUIPMENT.

11. OTHER SIGNS OF STABILIZATION. MEA WILL BEGIN TWICE WEEKLY FLIGHTS TO CYPRUS DEC 2. AIRLINE OFFICIALS EXPECT CONSIDERABLE TRAVEL BETWEEN CYPRUS AND LEBANON, BUT PREDICT THAT MOST LEBANESE NOW IN CYPRUS WILL REMAIN THERE UNTIL NEXT SUMMER. DIRGEN OF ELECTRICITY BIZRI ANNOUNCED ELECTRICITY 30 HOURS OUT OF EVERY 48 IN WEST BEIRUT. MINISTRY OF JUSTICE EMPLOYEES BACK ON THE JOB; FIRST FORMAL LEGAL ACCUSATION IN 19 MONTHS MADE NOV 29. PAPERS REPORT WATER WILL BE DISTRIBUTED TO ALL PARTS OF CAPITAL IN NEAR FUTURE, THOUGH ONLY PERIODICALLY IN CERTAIN AREAS. WITH REOPENING OF ZAHRANI REFINERY, GHASSAN TUEINI SAYS SHORTAGE OF MAZOUT AND GASOLINE SHOULD SOON END. BEGINNING AT END OF WEEK, APARTMENT HOUSES WILL BE ABLE TO OBTAIN MAZOUT FOR HEATING.
LANE UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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